



Friday, June 16, 2006

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Governor Doyle Announces \$200,000 to Local Workforce Development Boards to Advance Worker Skills

Madison – Governor Jim Doyle today announced that the Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board and the Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin, Inc. will each receive \$100,000 from the Governor's Council on Workforce Investment (CWI) for two projects aimed to increase employment and training opportunities for Wisconsin workers and to provide improved services for Wisconsin's employers.

"At the heart of my Affordability Agenda is a commitment to creating good jobs and ensuring that people have the training necessary to compete for those jobs," Governor Doyle said. "The projects receiving awards today contain innovative ideas to further spark the creation of high-skill job opportunities and will help meet the needs of Wisconsin's workers and employers in our state."

The **Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board**, in collaboration with the North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board and the Northwest Wisconsin Workforce Investment Board, to develop a technology-based workforce development system which will expand the delivery of Job Center services beyond the confines of a physical location and make employment services available from anywhere internet access exists.

The three local workforce development boards collaborating on the project serve a total of 25 counties, primarily rural areas, with a total population of nearly 1 million. The Virtual Job Center increases the capacity of the local workforce development boards to provide a comprehensive array of services and allows for more flexibility for job seekers and employers. The Virtual Job Center will mean an increased level of services for rural areas and access to Job Center services outside of normal business hours. The Virtual Job Center will allow job seekers to register specific demographic information, such as work experience, educational levels and skills, and job preferences so that services can be targeted to the individual. Employers will also use the Virtual Job Center to post job openings, review job seeker resumes and access labor market data. The website will also provide the latest information on employer events, such as labor law clinics, employer workshops and local job fairs.

The **Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin, Inc.** has also been awarded \$100,000 for a project to improve training opportunities for job seekers in high-growth, high-demand occupations and emerging industries. The purpose of the project is to establish a distance learning platform that will broaden access within the region to industry-driven education and training for future and incumbent workers. While being developed in the South Central Wisconsin Region, serving the counties of Marquette, Sauk, Columbia, Dodge, Dane and Jefferson, the project can be expanded statewide through the project's collaborators: The Wisconsin Educational Communication Board and the UW-Extension-Broadcasting and Media Innovations which includes the Instructional Communications System, Wisconsin Public Television and Wisconsin Public Radio.

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These awards are funded by the Governor's Council on Workforce Investment. The council has earmarked \$400,550 for proposals throughout the state that demonstrate the ability to fuel job growth. The Racine Area Manufacturers and Commerce (RAMAC) was awarded \$100,000 earlier in June for their project to enhance worker training in a 7-county area in Southeastern Wisconsin.

The Council on Workforce Investment is appointed by the Governor. The council's mission and goals focus on investments that will benefit the state, its businesses, and its residents, including, increasing education, skills and wage; focusing on the future economy; making smart and strategic regional decisions; and, fostering entrepreneurship.